FRIENDS
OF ACPL

y 5/60

y 5/60

Busy Little Birds

Don't kill the birds, the little birds
That sing about your door
Soon as the joyous spring has come
And chilly winds are o'er.

THE TREE TOP BIRDS AT-HOME

BUSY LITTLE BIRDS

THE WONDERS OF BIRD LIFE

By Clara J. Denton
Author of "Real Out-of-Door Stories," "Open Air Stories," "Real Bird Tales."

ILLUSTRATED BY
Sue Seeley

"A JUST RIGHT BOOK"
PUBLISHED BY
ALBERT WHITMAN CO.
CHICAGO U.S.A

BUSY LITTLE BIRDS

Copyright 1924, by Albert Whitman & Co.
Chicago, U. S. A.

"JUST RIGHT"
BOOKS
BY
CLARA J. DENTON

Real Bird Tales
Cozy Corner Stories
Homespun Stories
Real Out-of-Door Stories
Open Air Stories

Published by
ALBERT WHITMAN
& CO.
Chicago, U. S. A.

Mr. and Mrs. Robin's choicest dinner

JUST RIGHT BOOK
PUBLISHED IN THE U. S. A.

NOTE

The unusual incidents given in the following pages are verified by the actual observers, the numbers appended thereto refer to the names which are given in the appendix.

The incidents marked with an asterisk (*) were seen by the author.

AUTHORITIES CONSULTED

"MICHIGAN BIRD LIFE," by Walter Bradford Barrows.

"HANDBOOK OF BIRDS OF EASTERN NORTH AMERICA," by Frank M. Chapman.

"BIRD LORE," back and current numbers.

APPENDIX

Names of the observers of certain incidents which appear in these stories.

1. *Miss Letitia I. Foster, Cloverdale, Barry Co., Mich.*
2. *Judge Harry Creswell, Pres., Grand Rapids, Mich., Audubon Society.*
3. *Mrs. W. S. Coleman, Grand Rapids, Mich.*
4. *Miss L. G. Winegar, Grand Rapids, Mich.*

Contents

Page

What the Bluejaw Saw 9
The Piecrust Breakfast 23
An Early Morning Chat 90
The Chase 103
The Return 115

FULL PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS

Pointed It at My Father 15
They Eat Our Eggs Whenever They Can Get Them 19
Just at This Moment a Beautiful Bluejay Called Out 21
Good People Have Put Up a Wren's House 27
As Soon as the Sun Comes Out It All Will Melt Away 29
At Last She Saw Some Horses Feeding in a Meadow 41
The Cowbird Never Builds a Nest 47
Mr. and Mrs. Oriole 53
The Red-Breasted Grosbeak—You Will Find That Bathing Place ... 61
Up the Tree in Which Mrs. Wren's House Was Perched 74
A Handsome Red-Winged Blackbird Lit on the Limb Near Mrs. Robin 91
His Name Is Kingfisher 97
A Large Bird Which Was Circling About 111

"That may be true," said Mrs. Robin

Busy Little Birds

We were such hungry little beggars

WHAT THE BLUEJAY SAW

"WHAT DO you think of this place?" asked Mr. Robin as he warbled the last notes of his merry morning song.

"O, this is just right," twittered Mrs. Robin.

"Just right?" repeated her happy husband, "I hope you may always feel that way about it and not wish you were somewhere else after the nest is built and the eggs are laid."

"Indeed, I never will," the good little wife went on, "because this orchard, standing on top of a hill, as it does, gives us a fine view of the rest of the world."

Mr. Robin's plans were more sensible, however, and he replied with an extra twitch or two of his brown tail, "I don't care whether I look at the whole world or not, but I am glad that there is a fine garden on the other side of the orchard fence, and later when we are busy, it will be much better not to have to fly half around the farm in order to find a place where slugs are plentiful. This orchard is so close to the garden that it is just the right kind of place for birds and there should be a great many here this summer.

Mrs. Robin was standing on the very topmost limb of the apple tree which her husband had chosen as their home and she heard, without thinking about it, the happy talk about the near-by garden. She was enjoying to the full the privilege over which she had been so happy, "looking down on the rest of the world."

"I think," she began when Robin's voice ceased, "there is something familiar about this place. I really believe it is the very spot

where I was hatched last summer. Yes, yes, I am certain of it, for there is the same house where the people lived who used to drive the cats and other cruel creatures away when my brothers and I were learning to fly. I cannot be mistaken for the house stood on a hill overlooking a beautiful little lake, just as that one does. The people used to sit on the porch and watch the boats on the water. O, but I'm glad we came here."

"Well, even if it is the same house and porch and water, the same people may not live there," said the wise Robin who knew much more about humans than did his younger wife. "People don't always stay right on in the same nest year after year any more than birds do. So it may be that there are mean people living there now who will try to drive us away for fear we will get a cherry or a berry now and then."

"Just as if we haven't a right to their many cherries and berries," chirped his wife angrily, "I wonder how much fruit they'd have anyway if we birds didn't act as policemen and destroy the thieving creatures who are always busy around their trees and vines."

"Of course, of course," scolded Mr. Robin, "but you see many humans don't know that, they think everything belongs to them, even the air, the sunshine and the rain."

"What ignorant creatures they must be," said Mrs. Robin.

"So they are, so they are, my dear, the most ignorant creatures ever made and yet they think themselves the wisest. They think they know everything, and yet, really it is so strange, there are more things they don't know than there are things they do know."

"That may all be true," said Mrs. Robin cocking her head wisely, "but at the same time they are bigger and stronger than we are and I've heard that they can hurt us very easily."

"Indeed they can, my dear little wife, and I, for one, have learned that they are good creatures to keep away from. Isn't it queer that big beings like they are should care to trouble helpless little creatures like us? The summer that I was hatched a man took one of those long black things they love to carry around with them, and of which I have been afraid ever since, pointed it at my father until it made a great noise, and then poor father fell down dead. As we were very little birds mother had a hard time bringing us up, I can never forget how she worked, we were such hungry little beggars and one of us, smaller

Pointed it at my father

and weaker than the others, didn't push up in front and get his full share of worms, so that he finally died, poor birdlet."*

"What a sad story," said his kind hearted wife, "but all humans are not like that bad man, remember. Those who lived here last year were not, and if they are still in that house we'll be sure to have a happy summer. I heard mother tell how kind and thoughtful they were to her and our father when they first set up housekeeping, and I well remember one day when I was just learning to fly one of those big things they call a squirrel, came running at me. I shut my eyes, and thought I was just as good as caught, but one of the little humans, mother called him a boy, threw a stick at the squirrel and drove him away."

"A boy, indeed!" chirped Mr. Robin, "I

know what they are, they steal your eggs and catch you if they get a chance."

"It must be then that boys are not all alike," returned Mrs. Robin, "for this one certainly saved me from that mean squirrel. I should not have lived to tell the tale if it hadn't been for that good boy."

"O, you had all your fright for nothing," said Mr. Robin, "the squirrel wouldn't have hurt you anyway, they eat our eggs whenever they can get them, but I have never known one to eat a bird."

"But," objected Mrs. Robin, "they have strong teeth with which they break open hard nuts, so I don't see why they can't eat tender young birds."

"Perhaps they can, but I'm very sure they don't," said Mr. Robin in his most positive manner.

Just at this moment a beautiful Blue Jay, that had been perched for several minutes on the next apple tree, called out in his loudest tones:

"O, brother Robin, you know very little about the red squirrels, if you are saying what you really believe."

"I never say anything else," returned Robin, rather crossly.

"Then you have not seen much of squirrels," the Jay went on good-naturedly, "last summer a bold, impudent, red squirrel came to our home when our little ones were only a day old and carried off the biggest fattest nestling of the lot."

"You surprise me," exclaimed the Robin, "but tell me did you see him really eat the little bird?"

"Well, hardly," retorted the Bluejay jump-

They eat our eggs whenever they can get them

ing around in excitement, "not only my mate and I rushed at him, but our cries brought to us all the Bluejays and other birds in that part of the wood. Then some humans rushed out of a big white rag house they live in—"

"O yes, a tent," interrupted Mr. Robin.

"I don't know what they called it, but I suppose you know as you are around among them so much and are older than I am, but anyway, we all made such a fuss, birds and humans together, and the humans threw sticks and stones at the Squirrel, that by and by he dropped the bird and ran off where we couldn't find him."

"What became of the poor baby?" asked Mrs. Robin.

"O, it was quite dead from the fall," returned the Jay, "so don't ever tell anyone again that squirrels will not bother young

Just at this moment a beautiful Bluejay called out

birds, because this is the truth that I am telling you." (1)

"So, you see, dear Robin," said his wife lovingly, "I would not have been with you here this morning, if it had not been for that dear little boy."

"I wish I knew where he is, I'd sing a song to him to pay him for saving you for me," chirped Mr. Robin.

His little wife, however, only half heard his remark, as she was looking fixedly toward the house on the hill.

THE PIE CRUST BREAKFAST

The chipping Sparrow

WHEN THE Bluejay had received the thanks of Mr. Robin for his information about the squirrel he flew away and the Robin then turned his attention to his little wife. She spoke out eagerly:

"O, yes, Robin dear, the same people are in that house, I am sure. Do you see those long white threads hanging from the porch? I have heard my mother say that the people

used to put threads out for the birds to work into their nests. How good it is that we have come early this year and so have found this tree close to the house before some other birds had settled on it.

"Yes, but don't you think it would be a good plan for you to get to work on the nest before some other birds come along and start a nest in the very spot we have selected? There isn't a thing here to show that we have chosen this place and I must say, we are not the only Robins in the world that prefer the forks of an appletree to any other place for a home."

"You are right as usual, dear Robin, so I'll be off," and away she flew to find some sticks as a foundation for the new home.

In a very few moments Mrs. Robin returned with several good sized sticks in her bill. As she was putting them carefully in place Robin asked in surprise:

"How did you find all those sticks so quickly?"

"I had the good luck to come upon a big heap of them," she answered. "Those good people have put up a Wren's house and have made the opening so small that only a Wren can get through it. Nearly all of the sticks the Wrens bring cannot be pushed through the opening. They work with them a long time, then they get discouraged and drop them on the ground and that is where I found them. I am so glad because they will make my work much easier."*

"All right," said Mr. Robin, "I am glad to hear it, I know where that Wren's house is, for the little fellow sings all the time and you could not miss his home if you should try."

The work on the nest went on rapidly and when the Robins tucked their heads under their wings that night, the nest was far enough along to prevent any other bird from choosing the forks in that apple tree.

When the Robins awoke at dawn they were a very surprised pair, for they found the whole world white.

"O, O, O!" twittered Mrs. Robin in great surprise, "what has happened to everything?"

"Why, my dear," said the older and wiser husband, "don't you know what that is? Have you never seen snow before?"

Good people have put up a Wren's house

"No indeed," was the answer, "so that is snow! Of course I've heard about it from my mother, but I was hatched too late last year to see any. What are we to do with everything covered up in this way? We shall starve to death, I am sure, and of course I cannot finish the nest, what a strange, strange state we are in," and the frightened little creature almost fell off from the limb in her anxiety.

"There, there, my dear, don't worry," consoled Mr. Robin, "the snow will not stay long. As soon as that great warmer, the sun, comes out it will all disappear."

"Are you sure?" asked Mrs. Robin doubtfully, "how can it be? What has the sun to do with it anyway?"

As soon as the sun comes out it all will melt away

"I cannot explain it to you, I only know that it is so."

"Have you ever seen it do that way?"

"O yes, indeed, last year we had a very late spring, the snow came two or three times, but as soon as the sun came out it all went away."

"But where did it go?"

"That is a question that I cannot answer, my dear, I only know that it vanished."

"But I am hungry and there isn't a thing to eat in sight, every bug and worm is covered up."

"We will fly down to the back door of the house, if those people are as good as you think they are they must have thrown something out for us to eat."

With these words Mr. Robin flew away, and his little wife thought it wise to follow him.

The first thing they saw when they lit on the ground near the door was a big square piece of pie crust; the filling had been scooped out, and the crust, which by some accident had been only half baked had been thrown out on the ground. The Robins at once jumped upon the big crust and began their breakfast.

"I believe I'd rather have a good fat slug," said Mr. Robin, as he swallowed a big beakful of the soft stuff, "but then this is a great deal better than no breakfast at all."

"Why of course it is," chirped Mrs. Robin softly, "and I think we ought to love these good people for all their kindness to us."

Mr. Robin, however, had no time to discuss the goodness of anyone, he was too busy fill-

ing up his empty crop. They were rapidly making way with the big pie-crust, when down in front of them dropped a pair of Wrens.

"Bad morning for birds," said Mrs. Jennie Wren as she and her merry husband added their bills to the inroad of the pie-crust.

"So it is," returned Mr. Robin, "but this makes a very fair breakfast on a snowy morning, and I'm sure there's enough here for all of us."

"I hope so," said Mr. Wren, "for although I am very hungry, I don't like to feel that I am robbing anyone."

At that moment they heard the shrill call of the Bluejay as he lit on the roof of the shed near which their breakfast was spread.

"I wonder if he is coming too," asked Mrs. Robin.

"He is calling his mate," said Jennie Wren, "he is a very polite fellow and will not eat without her."*

"I have heard very bad stories about him," said Mr. Robin, "that he steals eggs and I have always been a little afraid of him."

"He surely is a fine bird to look at," said Mrs. Robin pausing in her meal and turning her head to get a good look at his beautiful color.

"There, there," chirped Mr. Robin, "never you mind his good looks."

"But," said Mrs. Robin, "what can be any prettier than waiting for his mate before he goes to breakfast, and I dare say he is just

as hungry as you were when you flew off without waiting to see whether I was coming or not."

Just what Mr. Robin would have said in reply is not known, for at this moment the two Bluejays flew down to enjoy the pie-crust.

"I hope there is room for us," said the Jay politely, as he took a dainty nibble of the pie-crust and immediately fed it to his waiting wife. (2)

"O yes," said the Robin good naturedly, "my wife and I were the first ones to find this breakfast table, but we have had nearly enough, so we will leave you soon."

Just then a hungry little Chipping Sparrow appeared among the birds.

"Well, well," chirped the Robin loudly, "two Wrens, two Bluejays, two Robins, and

one Sparrow, but see the sun is shining now, the snow will soon be gone, so I think I can bear it until I find a worm."

"So can I," said Mrs. Robin, and away they flew together.

The other birds, however, were still too hungry to leave the queer feast, so they stayed and ate until there was not a crumb of the soft pie crust left. (1)

THE FINISHED NEST

MR. ROBIN proved a true prophet, in less than an hour after the pie-crust breakfast was over, not a trace of the snow remained except in the deep woods or in some sheltered corners of the orchard. The birds were as happy as creatures could be. The Robin sang with all his might, the Wren war-

Could be heard the plaintive "Et-se-wee-ah" of the Meadow Lark

bled as if his little body would burst, the Blue-jay called his loudest, the little chipping sparrow added his feeble trill, while in the wide meadow beyond the orchard could be heard the plaintive "et-se-dee-ah" of the meadow lark.

The nest-building went on swiftly while Mr. Robin sang his best. His wife knew that there was no time to lose, the nest must be ready for the eggs which she must lay be-

fore she could begin her long time of patient waiting.

"I think," she said, one morning as she stood looking her nest over, "there should be a strong firm horse-hair twisted about the edge of the nest. I wish I knew just where to find one."

"That's not so easy," said Mr. Robin, "but if you cannot find one you may find some string that will do."

"Very well," said his wife, "But anyhow I'm going off to find a horse hair if I possibly can."

She flew out of the orchard and past the barn for the people who lived in the house on the hill did not keep horses. Her bright eyes were looking, looking everywhere but

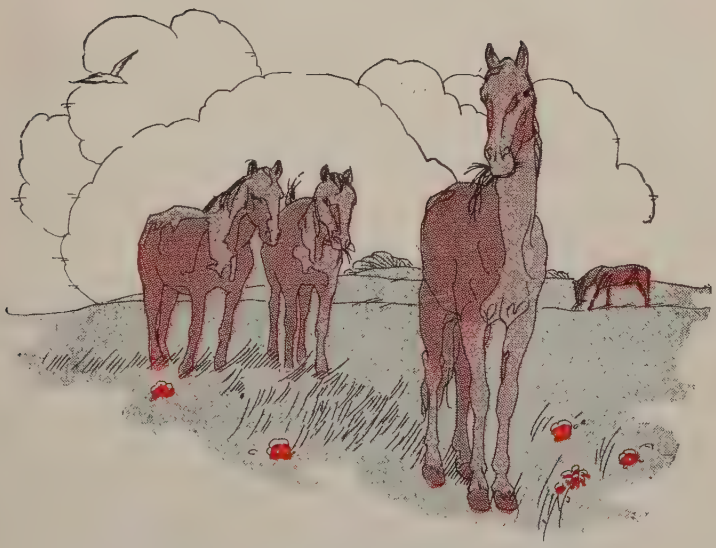
not a horse hair could she see. At last she saw some horses feeding in a meadow far away and saying to herself, "I can surely find one there," away she went on hopeful wings.

The horses were gathered in a fence corner near some tall blackberry bushes, and little Mrs. Robin was pretty sure there would be some hairs caught in these briery bushes. Her bright eyes soon spied a long white string hanging from one of the higher twigs. "If I can't get a horse hair, this string is the next best thing," she said to herself.

She flew to the bush, caught the end of the string in her bill, looped it up and pulled on it with all her might, but the wind had twisted the string around and around the twig so

that all the bird's strength could not loosen it, then she did a very wise thing, she threw herself off the limb, thus bringing all the weight of her plump little body on the string,* it broke in two and she flew away as happy a little bird as you ever saw. Mr. Robin flew to meet her when she came near the nest and he broke into a happy song as soon as they came to the home tree. Mrs. Robin could not sing as did her gay husband but she was quite as happy because she had found exactly what she wanted.

"Do you know" she said as she stood on the edge of the nest a moment before beginning the work of twisting the string into place, "I flew clear through the orchard, and it is just full of birds, I didn't know there were so



At last she saw some horses feeding in a meadow

many birds in the world. I wonder why they all seem to flock to this orchard, I should think they would rather be in the deep woods."

"Then why aren't we in the deep woods, too, if that is the best place for birds?" asked her husband.

"Why, I don't know I am sure," answered his good wife dropping her head in a thoughtful manner, "I never thought about it in that way, I supposed that we came here near a house, because we were hatched in that kind of a place. I know that I was hatched in this very tree as I have told you before, and I suppose you were hatched in a tree near some other house, so that is why you like this kind of a place."

"There is a deeper reason than that, my dear," said Mr. Robin wisely. "Very few birds go to the deep woods, for the simple reason that there is very little food for them there. They follow around where humans work the soil, stir it up with the plough and plant the seeds in it. Then the insects come and the birds depend on them for food. It is the same way with fruit, men plant the fruit trees, then the insects come to live in the branches and they make good fat living for the birds. If it were not for us there wouldn't be trees or in fact green things of any kind, for the insects would soon have them all killed, so that is the reason why birds flock around where humans live, instead of wandering off in the deep woods where the ground is never

stirred up for planting, and so of course insects are scarce. When you think of the hungry bills we shall soon have to fill you will see we could not stay in a place of that kind."

"Well, well," said Mrs. Robin, "how very very wise you are dear Robin, I had never thought about all that before."

Just at this moment there was a great commotion in the trees near by for all the birds seemed chirping at once. Mrs. Robin paused in her work of weaving in the string to wonder what was going on, and her husband telling her that he would go and find out for her, since she could not leave her work, flew off out of sight.

"Of course he doesn't care what is the matter, he is going just for me, he hasn't any

curiosity himself. O no," she said to herself, with a funny little twitter which was her only way of laughing.

It must be confessed that the busy wife would have gone off among the other birds if she had not known that the nest must be finished. She worked the string into the edge of the nest and when that task was finished she jumped into the nest and with her soft breast pressed it into a perfect shape. Then she climbed out and standing on the edge looked down into it chirping softly to herself as if she were saying, "It is all right now, nothing can make it any better."

At this moment she heard the whirr of Mr. Robin's wings close beside her. He chirped

away in a scolding tone for a few moments, while his wife in her softest tones tried to quiet him. At last he stopped his scolding and gave his tail an angry fling.

"What in the world have they been doing to you Robin?" she asked.

"Nothing, nothing at all," was his answer, "when I came where they were I heard the Bluejays scolding about a big Cow-bird who had gone into a bush where the Chipping Sparrow has its nest."

"Well, what harm could they do?" asked his wife. "Isn't a big bush strong enough for two nests?"

"Yes, but you see, the Cow-bird never builds a nest. She is a lazy creature who lays her eggs in the nests of other birds."

The Cow Bird never builds a nest

"O, dear, O dear, what a dreadful thing!"

"Didn't you ever hear of that before?" asked the husband wisely.

"No indeed," was the answer, "I didn't know there was such a bird."

"O, my dear little wife, how true it is that you have much yet to learn."

"Well," retorted Mrs. Robin a little crossly, "I don't know that I am in any great hurry to learn about birds who steal into other bird's nests and lay their eggs there, but why were the birds all making such a fuss? I was afraid they were hurting you."

"O, no," exclaimed the proud fellow perking his head high in the air, "no birds ever bother me, not even the English Sparrow, although they do make themselves very dis-

agreeable to many birds, but I have learned to fight them so they let me alone."

"But what was all the noise about?"

"O, some of us were just scolding over things in general. Of course I had to listen to the Bluejays' story about the Cow-bird, and some other birds came along and we had a great time gossiping over all the wrongs done in the bird world by Cow-birds and others. One little Yellow bird told such a queer story about a Cow-bird dropping an egg into her nest. She built her nest over it so that the Cow-bird's egg was out of sight, then along came the Cow-bird and dropped in another egg and then she built over it again, so that she had a three storied nest, and then the Cow-bird let the nest alone."

"But what did you do to plan things right."

"O, nothing, how could we?"

"Why didn't you go into the bush and drive the Cow-bird away?"

"O, we couldn't do that, the bird who owned the nest should have stayed at home and watched it just as I have been watching our home here for the last three or four days."

"Well, then if you couldn't do any thing to keep the Cow-bird from his bad tricks, I don't see why you wasted your time scolding about it. You might better have been here helping me twist this string into the new nest."

"I am sure you didn't need any help," he answered in his most flattering tones, "I never saw anything more beautiful than this

nest. It is wonderful indeed, especially since it is the first one you have ever built."

"I am glad it pleases you," said Mrs. Robin proudly, "although it cannot compare with the one Mrs. Oriole is hanging from the elm tree near the house, nor with the one the little Vireo is building here in our own orchard. They are the most beautiful things I ever saw and I know I can never equal either one of them if I should build a hundred nests."

"Of course not," said her husband tenderly, "because you are a Robin and neither an Oriole nor a Vireo."

"Well, I have done my best, and I am glad you are satisfied, I am sure it is not done any too early. I shall sleep in the nest tonight, and in the morning I think there will be an egg in the nest."

"And it will not be laid by a Cow-bird either," said the happy husband.

"What will the Chipping Sparrow do with the Cow-bird's egg, will she put it out of the nest?" asked the wife anxiously.

"No," was the reply, "it is too big for that. If she has no eggs of her own in the nest she will perhaps build her nest over it, if she has her own eggs already there she will just go on sitting and hatch out the Cow-bird's egg with her own."

"I do think that is the strangest thing I ever heard of, but perhaps the Chipping bird will learn after this to stay with her nest when it is built."

"Well, maybe so, but then you know, there are some creatures who never learn, and I

Mr. and Mrs. Oriole

have heard it said that there are some humans like that, they just go right on all their lives making the same mistakes over and over, so it isn't so strange in a foolish little bird like the Chipping Sparrow," he added wisely.

Mrs. Robin, however, only half heard the latter part of this sermon, for the sun was down and she had already jumped into her nest and put her head under her wing.

Mr. Robin sang a few low notes of his good night song, then moving along on the limb of the tree until he was as close as possible to the new nest he also put his head under his wing and all was quiet at the Orchard Home.

SOME BOY STORIES

The Chewick is a most sociable bird

AT THE first peep of dawn, Mr. Robin gave the opening notes of the usual morning chorus. His wife awoke at once and hopped out of the nest with a merry twitter, which was the best she could do in the way of a song.

Robin peered over into the nest as his wife left it, and there, true enough, was the very thing she had promised, a little blue egg.

Wasn't Mr. Robin proud and happy? Indeed he was, and he joined with all his might in the orchard chorus which was now well under way, from Wren, Bluebird, Thrush, Song Sparrow, Vireo, Oriole, Bobolink, Meadow Lark, Catbird and Blackbird, each doing his best to outsing his neighbor, while the strange cry of the Flicker rose now and then above all other sounds. The concert continued fast and merrily until the sun had sent its warm beams over the earth. Then the business of the bird world began and the joyous chorus was over. Now and then, it is true, a solitary singer lifted his voice, but with the shining of the sun most of the birds began the serious business of the day. No young birds had yet been hatched. Indeed, in many cases the place for the nest had not

been chosen and some of the loudest singers and most gayly dressed males had not even selected their mates. Mr. and Mrs. Robin were ahead of most of the other birds, since their nest was finished and held one egg.

As they stood near their home, guarding it from all harm, a handsome rose-breasted Grosbeak lit on a branch near them and in his most civil manner asked the happy couple if they could direct him to a good bathing place.

"Why, that reminds me," answered Mrs. Robin, "last summer there was a fine bathing place some distance back from the house which stands on the hill. I have heard my mother say that the good people who lived in the house had made it for the birds."

"Do you think you can show me the place?" asked the Grosbeak.

"Well, I haven't seen it this year," answered Mrs. Robin, "the truth is, I have been so busy nest building that I have taken my baths just wherever and whenever it happened, and have not taken the time to look for the last year's bathing place, but if you fly down back of the house, no doubt, you will see the birds going there. I know that is the way they used to do last summer."

"But, how can you be sure that things are just as they were last summer? Human beings, I have been told, change and move about a great deal, although the poor things haven't any wings."

"So they do, so they do, but at the same time, I know, in many ways, that the same

good people are in that house, and so, I am sure, if you look around you will find that fine bathing place."

So with this, the Grosbeak had to be content, for Mrs. Robin did not intend to wander very far from her nest and its one egg.

As the Grosbeak flew away, Mr. Robin declared that he was ready for his breakfast.

"You stay here, little wife," he said, "while I go after some worms and I will soon return with some for you."

So Mrs. Robin nestled down on the limb of the apple tree, close to the nest with the one precious egg in it. While she was waiting there so contentedly a Chewink came flying that way and seeing Mrs. Robin sitting alone he stopped for a moment's chat, for the Chewink is a most sociable fellow.

"Such a queer thing happened out there in the field," he said to Mrs. Robin, "would you like to hear about it?"

"Of course I would," was the answer, "although I have to stay at home so very closely, I always like to know what is going on in the great world."

"Some boys and girls were marching through the field and—"

"O dear me," interrupted Mrs. Robin with a shiver of fear, "boys and girls, that is dreadful news, I do hope they'll not come here."

"No," said the Chewink, "they have gone away off to the other side of the field, but when I have told you just what happened you will not think they are such dreadful creatures. A little sparrow had built her nest close to a stump and it was right in the path

The Redbreasted Grosbeak—you will find that bathing place

the children were taking. Of course, when the boys and girls came, the poor little birds flew about in great distress for the heedless children were quite likely to step upon the nest; then, one little boy, hearing the cries, left the line where he was marching and called to the children as they came along to walk on the other side of the stump."

"And did they do it?" asked Mrs. Robin, trembling with anxiety.

"Yes, they seemed to think he had been placed there by someone to tell them where to go and so, every one of that big crowd of girls and boys went on the other side of the stump, leaving the Sparrow's nest safe and sound in the tall grass. When the whole crowd had passed on to the farther side of the field where they were to play and sing a

while, the little boy had to run as fast as he could to catch up with them."

"Dear me, I wonder if he was scolded for not keeping up with the others."

"I dare say he was, but I don't believe he cared, because you see, he had saved the Sparrow's home."

"I didn't suppose boys ever did anything so kind as that and I hope this boy will always have a good home."

"I hope so too, I am sure he deserves it," said the Chewink, "I must confess his act was a surprise to me, although I have seen a few boys who were careful of birds and their nests."*

Just at this moment Mr. Robin returned with a fat worm which he fed to his wife, and

of course, he had to be told the story of the boy who had guarded the Sparrow's nest.

"What a pity it is," he said, "that we cannot know that boy when we see him. We have all been taught to be afraid of boys and how fine it would be if we could learn the difference between the good ones and the bad ones."

"Well, I saw him," said the Chewink, "and I must confess that he didn't look in any way different from others I have seen, so you better not let the boys come too near you after all." And with this warning, the Chewink flew away.

Mrs. Robin, who was a loving little creature, told to every bird who came near the story of the boy guardian, but as soon as she was done talking, Mr. Robin would repeat the

Chewink's last warning, adding for himself the wise remark, that boys had for so long borne the reputation of being cruel to birds that they must not expect the birds to forget all at once their past evil deeds.

When he made this cautious remark to several of his bird friends his kind hearted wife said, "O, Robin dear, don't you think you are too suspicious of those poor things you call boys?"

Mr. Robin gave his handsome body an angry fling as he answered:

"Indeed, I am not, I must now tell you a story, when I was a very little bird, before I had even tried to fly, a great big boy climbed up in the tree where our home was placed. Perhaps he didn't mean to hurt us but he wanted to look at our home. He didn't

seem to know that our nest was put up high just so he couldn't see into it. Our homes belong to us and neither boys nor men have any right to pry into them, but they don't think of that. So up the boy came and as he was very big and heavy he shook the limb on which the nest was placed so hard that one of my brothers was knocked out of the nest and the fall on the hard ground killed him."

"Wasn't the boy sorry?"

"Yes, he seemed to be, but that didn't comfort my unhappy father and mother, or bring back the poor little life he had taken away."*

The Squirrel ran up the trunk of the tree

AT THE conclusion of this sad story Mrs. Robin sat very quiet for a few moments, then, she said thoughtfully:

"How fine it would be if all boys loved us and befriended us whenever they had a chance."

"Yes," said her husband, "if they did and would, you could fly away with me and pick up your own dinner, but now you have to stay here and watch that one precious egg."

"O, no, Robin," the thoughtful wife answered, "you forget that we have other enemies than boys, don't lay all the wrong things to them. There are birds and other creatures who do quite as much harm to us as the boys."

"That is true," little wife answered Mr. Robin, "you are always able to see all sides of a question." And with these kind words he flew away leaving his wife to meditate upon his closing words. He had been gone but a few moments, however, when her pleasant thoughts were disturbed by a loud noise in the trees near by. She was at once all attention, for she was sure the noise must mean harm to her husband. She listened intently for his voice, but instead of his musical notes

she heard the scolding tones of the English Sparrow.

"Dear me," she chirped to herself, "that bad busy-body fellow is quarreling again, I believe I will just step away from the nest a moment and see what is going on."

She hopped to the end of the limb on which she sat and then saw that an English Sparrow and a handsome Oriole were having an excited discussion. Presently the Sparrow flew at the Oriole, but was soon driven off by the bigger bird, at this the Sparrow gave several loud piercing cries, and a dozen English Sparrows flew to his help. It looked as if the Oriole would soon be finished, but out of the orchard somewhere came two angry Cat-birds, and in the midst of the sharp fight which followed, she suddenly saw her hus-

band coming toward the battle, a big worm in his beak, which she thought was intended for her dinner.

At the sight of the raging battle, his fighting nature which is stronger than that of almost any other bird, overcame everything else. He dropped the worm to the ground and added his sharp bill to the pecks on the heads which the Sparrows were receiving.

At last the battle was won, the Sparrows were driven away and the victorious birds alighted in the trees to smooth their ruffled plumage. (1) Mrs. Robin immediately remembered her duties as sentinel and hurried back to her post. She was none too soon for a handsome Bluejay had just alighted

near the nest, but on catching sight of Mrs. Robin, he immediately flew away.

"Dear me," twittered the little housekeeper, her heart trembling with fear, "how dreadful it would have been if Mr. Bluejay had eaten my precious egg, what would dear Robin have said to me? I will never, never, leave the nest again, not even if all the birds in the orchard are mixed up in one great fight."

As these thoughts went through her small head she moved even closer to the nest than she had been before and she really meant to stay there. The time dragged slowly, however, and it seemed to her that it took Robin a long while to hunt up another worm. She might have been perfectly contented to wait

for him if she hadn't grown so decidedly hungry.

"I will just fly into the next tree," she said to herself, "I can see the house and the grounds around it better from there, and perhaps I can catch sight of Robin coming back with my dinner, at the same time I shall be close enough to the home tree to see if any creature comes near the nest."

She carried out her plan exactly and just as she lit on a limb which gave her a wide outlook, a big, fat red Squirrel ran up the trunk of the tree in which the Wren's house was perched. When Mrs. Robin caught sight of the Red Squirrel she was frightened, you may be sure, for whenever she saw one her thoughts flew back to the time in her early life when she came so near furnishing a fine

mouthful for a member of that family. She was not frightened for herself for she knew she was more than a match for the naughty fellow. But she felt sure that he was not sneaking up the Wren's house for any good, so she decided to watch him.

"The Wrens are so small," she said to herself, "they will not dare to try to drive him off, perhaps they will need my help."

At that very moment out of the wren house came Madam Jennie Wren and dashed at Mr. Squirrel, giving him a sharp peck on the head which caused him to turn about and slide down the tree-trunk much faster than he had sneaked up. Madam Wren was not done with him, however, she continued to chase him and as they came under the tree where Mr. Wren sat preening his feathers, he gave up

Up the tree in which Mrs. Wren's house was perched

the pleasure of making his toilet and joined in the chase. Away they all went, the two Wrens scolding with all their might, and though Mr. Squirrel's feet twinkled pretty rapidly, they were no match for the wings of the Wrens and so, every now and then, one or the other of them darted at him with a sharp peck on his round, red head. They disappeared around the house, and then reappeared again on the side near where Mrs. Robin sat and then, Mr. Squirrel dashed into the orchard.

Mrs. Robin was keeping her eye well upon him and she saw him suddenly bob into a hole in a dead apple tree. The Wrens seemed much surprised at his quick disappearance, but after looking around a few moments they seemed to think the battle

was won and they returned to the home tree where Mr. Wren rejoiced over the victory in one of his best concert solos. Mrs. Robin returned to her post feeling very happy, for she was quite sure that particular red Squirrel would avoid that particular corner of the orchard for the rest of the summer.*

"Now," said the good little wife to herself as she settled down as close to the nest as she could get, "if Robin would only fly home with a big fat worm in his beak I am sure I should be perfectly happy and contented."

At this moment she heard a faint rustle on the ground beneath her, and looking down in a tremor of fear she saw two little girls peering around on the ground.

"O, just girls," thought Mrs. Robin quite relieved, "they will do no harm to anyone.

They are looking for flowers, I suppose, although I should think they would be satisfied with what they have, for their hands are full of them. She heard them laughing and talking, but as she could not understand what they were saying, she paid no further attention to them and they soon passed out of her sight and hearing. The orchard seemed very quiet after they had gone on and she wondered if it wouldn't be a good plan to take a little nap to make the time pass more swiftly while waiting for Robin. She was just about to put her head under her wing when some loud and piercing cries from the Bluejays startled her so much that she nearly fell off the limb on which she was perched.

"Now, what's the matter?" she twittered, "I do hope Robin is not in any trouble."

THE BLUEJAY'S STORY.

We swallow acorns whole

ALL THOUGHTS of a nap were banished from Mrs. Robin's head, when she heard the cries of the Bluejays. She listened closely but could not hear Robin's note. She knew, however, that some dreadful thing had befallen the Bluejays. If she had been able to distinguish any other bird's notes she would have flown to them at once to inquire into the matter, but she had been taught that Blue-

jays were good birds to keep away from. So she just sat there humped up in a little heap and quietly waited for the trouble to end.

It was some time before the cries ceased, and, in a moment or two after silence came, Mrs. Robin was much surprised to see handsome Mr. Bluejay alight on a limb, a little above her, where he could look down into her nest and see the one small treasure which it held.

Mrs. Robin trembled a little with fear, although she tried to appear perfectly unconcerned, and for this reason she twittered a pleasant, "Good day," to Mr. Bluejay.

"Did you hear the noise?" asked Mr. Bluejay, hopping around excitedly.

"Why, yes," returned Mrs. Robin, "I couldn't help it very well. I should have of-

fered my aid, but I knew you Bluejays were perfectly able to take care of yourselves."

"Indeed we are, as a rule, but this was a very peculiar case."

"Do tell me about it," said Mrs. Robin, moving a little closer to her nest.

"I believe you know," said the Jay, "that my mate and I have a nest in a big bush which grows near the orchard fence?"

"No," was the answer, "I did not know it, although I have seen you around here several times."

"Well," continued the Bluejay, "we have one there, and we thought we had chosen a spot where it could not be disturbed."

"Are there any eggs in it?" asked Mrs. Robin.

"O no," answered Mr. Bluejay, "the nest is just finished and a little while ago, when my mate and I were sitting on the fence, disturbing no one, along came two little girls, but of course we were not afraid, because we have been taught that little girls are kind and good, but suddenly one of the little girls picked up a stone and threw it at the nest. For a wonder, the stone hit the nest and down it went to the ground."

"A little girl!" exclaimed Mrs. Robin, "I am surprised, I didn't suppose little girls ever did things of that kind."

"Neither did I, but I am telling you the truth. Of course, my mate and I began to scream over the loss of our nest and presently two other pairs of Jays came flying to us and

joined their cries to ours, so that we made quite a noise."

"I should say you did, I thought all the birds in the orchard were in trouble."

"Well, it was a good thing," continued the Jay, "for they heard us down at the house and the little boy who lives there came running to the orchard, when he saw our nest on the ground he picked it up most carefully. You know Mrs. Bluejay does not weave her nest very firmly. Then he made the little girl show him where the nest was when she threw the stone at it and he climbed on the fence and put it back in the very same spot."*

"Well, well, well!" exclaimed Mrs. Robin, " a boy too, and I am as afraid of them as I am of a gun!"

"But," said the Bluejay, "you need never be afraid of the boy in that house, I know him well, for I have lived here now two winters to say nothing of the summers. In the winter he puts out food for us to eat and he is so kind and good to us that we have decided to spend the rest of our days in this orchard instead of flying off to a warmer place in the winter as so many Jays do."

"But if he is so good, why didn't he teach the little girl better than to throw stones at the bird's nest?" asked Mrs. Robin.

"O, they don't belong to each other, you must know that the girl lives away down in the village, in another nest, or I suppose I should say, house. I heard him tell her she ought to be ashamed of herself to knock a bird's nest down that way. But she told him

it was nothing but a Bluejay's nest, and they are a mean lot of thieves anyway."

"O my!" exclaimed Mrs. Robin admiringly, "could you understand what they said?"

"Yes, you see, I have lived among these people so long that I have learned to understand most of their words. He told her the Bluejays were not thieves and he said a lot more to her which I could not quite understand, and after a while they wandered away."

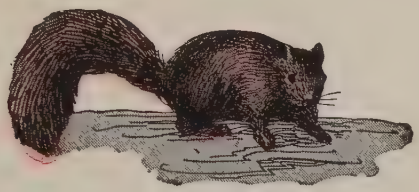
Just at this moment Mr. Robin appeared with a big worm in his beak, which he at once fed to his hungry wife, and then, of course, he had to listen to the Bluejay's story about the bad girl, and he said in closing, "I don't think it is fair to give all the Bluejays a bad

name just because there is a bad one now and then."

"You are right, it is not fair," said Mr. Robin, "no more than it would be fair to say that all humans are bad just because now and then, a bad one comes along with a gun and shoots one of us. Then too, all the birds are afraid of boys and they are not afraid of girls, but here was a girl who was worse than the boy."

"Which proves," said the Bluejay, "that we should not make any hard and fast rules for either birds or humans," and with this wise remark he flew away.

"That is all very well," said Mrs. Robin as she watched his beautiful blue back disappear among the trees, "but at the same time, I noticed that his eyes wandered pretty often



I fear the Red Squirrel more

to my one egg in the nest, and, as long as I know he is in the neighborhood, I don't intend to get very far from this spot. I did fly into the next tree awhile ago to watch for you because I was so hungry, but I was in sight of the nest all the time."

She then told Robin of the way the Wrens had routed the Red Squirrel, all of which pleased him very much.

"I fear the Red Squirrel more than I do the Jay," he said, "and I am glad the Wrens have driven him away, we now have one enemy less."

"There are plenty left, though," twittered Mrs. Robin.

"No matter, if we are brave and watchful we can overcome them all."

"You are brave, I know, but I do not think you are very watchful," said Mrs. Robin with an angry fling of her tail. "You were gone a long, long time, leaving me here to watch alone."

"Well, I knew you were doing your duty," answered Mr. Robin in a loving tone, "and you may be sure, if you had given one little cry I would have come to you just as fast as my wings could have brought me."

"But, I might have been killed while you were getting here," she said with another angry fling.

"O no," said her husband, "for I have seen you fight pretty hard when there was any real danger, and now, as the sun is almost down, I will sing you my very best good night song to make up for my staying away from you so long."

"All right, and I will pass the night in the nest," she said.

"As she settled her plump little body into the nest, she twittered softly to herself a few notes which meant, "Robin is brave and he sings most beautifully, but he can't lay eggs and I can," and she tucked her little head under her wing before Mr. Robin had half finished his evening song.

AN EARLY MORNING CHAT.

WHEN Mrs. Robin hopped out of the nest, early the next morning, Mr. Robin who was close by peered over the edge of the nest and saw another blue egg snuggled up close to the first one. You may be sure he was very proud and he at once began to sing his loudest notes. At the end of this song, telling his wife she should have the finest and fattest worm he could find for her breakfast, he flew away to make his promise good.

He had no sooner disappeared than a handsome red-winged Blackbird lit on the limb

A handsome Red-Winged Blackbird lit on the limb near Mrs. Robin

near Mrs. Robin and bade her a cheerful good morning.

As she was, at all times, a civil little creature, she returned the greeting pleasantly and then waited for him to open the conversation.

"Do you know what that sound is?" he asked at once.

"I don't hear anything," was the reply, "except the Bluebird and the Oriole singing, you can hear them at all hours of the day."

"But that isn't what I mean," explained the Blackbird, "Listen now, and you will hear it again, there it is!" he exclaimed eagerly.

"O, do you mean that harsh rattle?" asked Mrs. Robin, "I hear that every day, and I always supposed it was some sort of a noise

made by the people who live in the house yonder. Humans make all kinds of queer sounds, you know, poor things, I suppose they do the best they can."

"True enough, but this sound is not made by a human. If you will move along nearer to me, so that you can see through the trees, I can show you where the queer noise comes from."

Mrs. Robin turned her head toward the nest, but made neither a reply nor a motion to leave her position. The Blackbird noticing Mrs. Robin's slowness to move away from her nest, exclaimed.

"O, you needn't be afraid of me, I will not molest your treasures, I am not that kind of a bird, although I have a first cousin who is

said to be a bold robber. Come on now, and to make sure of my good intentions, you can perch between me and your home."

Thus assured, the little guardian moved along to an opening in the trees. She then saw a low white building with a peaked roof standing in the water quite close to the shore.

"O, another house!" she exclaimed in surprise, "I didn't know that one was there."

"It is very plain that you are a quiet little home body and do not go flying about as do so many mother birds. If you were that kind you would know that building is nothing but a boathouse. There is water and not land under that roof, and there the boats can safely ride at anchor and are always dry and ready for their owners to use."

Boats can safely ride at anchor

"How fine," said Mrs. Robin, " Humans are quite smart after all, but see, there is a beautiful bird on the peak of the roof, I never saw one like him before, such a lovely blue color and a handsome crest on top of his head, I wonder why I never saw him before? What is his name, do you know?"

"His name is Kingfisher, and the reason you have not seen him before is because he does not make his nest in the trees or bushes

as do most all other birds, and as I have said before you do not wander away from home very much."

"But," asked Mrs. Robin, in great surprise, "if he doesn't make his nest in the trees or bushes what does he do? He surely must have a place he calls his home."

"Yes, he makes his nest in a hole made by some sort of a water animal, in the bank of a stream, that is why I know so much about him, because I like to be near the water too."

"He is a handsome bird," said Mrs. Robin, looking at him intently, "but I think I should like him better if his head were not so big."

"Well," said the Blackbird, "as he goes head first into the water, perhaps he could not do that if his head were like yours or mine."

His name is Kingfisher

"But, what is he doing now?" asked Mrs. Robin, as the Kingfisher stood very still and seemed to be watching the water below.

"He is looking for a fish, see! there he goes."

Even as the Blackbird said these words the Kingfisher made a plunge into the water and in a moment or two he came flashing up to the roof again with a good-sized fish in his long bill, he flopped it quickly against the roof on which he sat, then opened his mouth and swallowed the fish whole.

"Well," exclaimed Mrs. Robin, "that was a big meal to be taken so quickly."

"Yes," said the Blackbird, "he is even smarter than we are, we swallow acorns whole, [3] but I am very sure we could not manage a fish that way."

"But where is he going now?" asked Mrs. Robin as the Kingfisher left the roof of the boathouse and flew in a straight line along the bank for a short distance, when he suddenly disappeared.

"He has gone into his nest in that bank!" exclaimed the Blackbird.

"Does he make it as we do, of sticks and mud?" she asked.

"O, no indeed! Sometimes he puts in dry grass, but not always. There is one thing though which is always found in the nest of the Kingfisher, and that is the bones of the fish they have swallowed."

"Why," exclaimed Mrs. Robin in much surprise," how can that be? I certainly saw him swallow that fish, bones and all."

"Of course, you did, that is the way he always takes his food, his stomach digests the flesh of the fish, but not the bones, they soon become soft, however, and they are thrown up by the bird in the shape of small pellets, these he distributes around on the floor of the nest as a soft lining for it."

"That is certainly a quick and easy way to build a nest," said Mrs. Robin, "but I do not think I should like it so well as my own way."

"Neither would I," said the Blackbird, "and besides all that, the Kingfishers are not good housekeepers, they never clean their nests out as the Robins and the Blackbirds do, but there is one good thing to be said about the Father Kingfisher, he is kind to his family and helps his wife hatch the eggs, which are usually five in number."

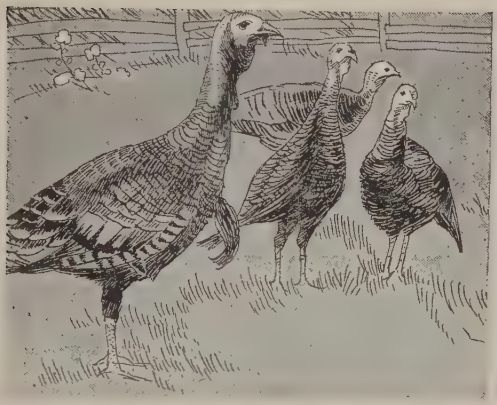
"You are very kind to tell me so many interesting things about the Kingfisher, I see that he is a very smart bird, and whenever I hear his harsh call after this I shall peep through the trees at him. It seems that he doesn't help along the humans as much as the rest of us do, since he doesn't eat up the insects which make them so much trouble."

"O, but he does, the Kingfisher likes variety in his food as well as the other birds, he eats grasshoppers, lizards, crickets and beetles of the June bug family. Many queer stories are told about these birds, by the humans, so I have heard, but I dare say, none of them are really true. Humans are always so busy, you know, that they do not take time to watch the birds, so they make up very queer stories about us. If they would spend more

time in studying us it would be better for us and also for themselves, but there comes your good husband with a worm in his beak, so I will just say good morning for this time."

"You don't mean to say you are really here?" twittered Mrs. Robin unkindly, "Were you waiting for this worm to grow?" she added as she snapped her bill over it and swallowed it greedily.

THE CHASE.



POOR Robin dropped his wings at this unkind speech and was silent for a minute or two, then his wife went on saucily.

"You haven't a word to say, I think you might at least tell me what you have been about."

"I will tell you gladly," said Mr. Robin, lifting his head and singing a few merry notes, "I was watching a High-hole, or Flicker,

boring a hole high up in a telephone pole, and the performance was so very interesting that time went by faster than I thought."

"Boring a hole high up? why that sounds like his name, Highhole, but what was he doing that for?"

"Making a place for his nest."

"You don't mean to say that a mere bird can bore a hole with his beak in the wood, big enough for him to go through!"

"Yes, that's just what I mean, and while I waited there he made a beginning and I was so surprised to see him work that, as I said before, I forgot for a few moments my duties as a husband, but I am sure you will forgive me this time."

"O yes, I will forgive you gladly," said Mrs. Robin with a saucy twist of her head,

I was watching a Flicker boring a hole in a telephone pole

"because I had a talk with Mr. Blackbird, and he told me all about the beautiful Mr. Kingfisher and the strange things he does."

"Kingfisher!" exclaimed Robin, twitching his tail angrily, "I hope you didn't have anything to say to that common fish-eating fellow. Why, I don't believe he would know a respectable grub if it was right under his eyes. He is not a good mannered bird for a genteel lady like yourself."

Mrs. Robin, pretending not to hear what he said, exclaimed,

"But now, Robin dear, if you will be so good as to stay here awhile and watch our home, I believe I will fly away and see the High-hole make a high hole," and without waiting for his answer, she spread her wings and in another moment was out of sight.

Mrs. Robin came out of the orchard at a point where she could plainly see the telephone pole and there on one of them, directly opposite to her, a bird much larger than herself, was striking hard and fast on the wood of the pole.

"Dear me," she chirped softly to herself, "I wonder if that is the bird he calls the 'High-hole,' why it is nothing in the world but one of those Golden winged Woodpeckers. I remember, there was a whole nest full of them hatched out near our nest last summer, but I didn't know that they could bore holes in the wood as that one is doing, for I don't believe I was hatched when they built the nest last year."

She kept her perch in the tree, watching eagerly the work of the Flicker, but suddenly

her eyes were turned from it to a pair of birds that had alighted on a limb below her. She could not see them clearly, but presently the male bird began to sing.

"Oho, that is the Grosbeak," twittered Mrs. Robin, "he is the beautiful fellow that, the other day, asked where he could find some water. How attentive he is to his wife, going around with her while she is finding stuff for her nest and singing to her all the while. I wish Robin was like that. He seemed to think he was doing his duty if he flew to meet me on my return with my bill full of building material, but then, I must remember, he is a Robin and not a Grosbeak and we all have our different ways of getting the same sort of work done."

With this comforting thought she turned

to fly back to her nest, but just at this moment, she heard a loud squawking near her, and full of curiosity to know what the noise meant, she changed her course and lit in a large oak tree back of the summer cottage. She perched on an outside limb where she could see whatever was going on and she soon discovered the cause of all the noise.

Two turkey hens with their broods of young ones were calling their flocks together, and between whiles giving cries of alarm. Presently they settled under the very tree where Mrs. Robin was perched. She scarcely knew what was going on, but she felt sure that danger of some sort was quite near. Suddenly she discovered, directly above them, a large bird which was circling slowly about and every moment coming nearer to

earth. She was terribly frightened and her first thought was that she must fly back to her home and the protection of her mate, but the next moment her own danger was forgotten, for one of the Turkey mothers arose quickly to the level of the strange bird and with wings outstretched and neck extended she seemed about to strike the bold intruder. He, however, fully realizing his danger, changed his slow poising to swift flight, and rising higher in the air darted away with the Turkey in close and swift pursuit.

Poor little Mrs. Robin gave a chirp of relief as she watched the two birds sail away into space. It was a losing chase from the beginning and the smaller bird was flying toward a forest which crowned a far-distant hill. Mrs. Robin watched them until they disap-

A large bird which was circling about

peared like two black spots within the gloom of the forest. She then hurried with all speed back to her home, where Robin impatiently awaited her coming. He began to ask her about her long absence when she interrupted him to tell her exciting story.

"O," said Mr. Robin quietly as she paused for breath, "that was a hawk and he was after a nice tender young turkey for his dinner."

"The wicked thing," said Mrs. Robin angrily, "I hope the mother Turkey will kill him."

"O, come now, don't blame the hawk too much," said Mr. Robin, "remember, he has to live as well as you, and he was doing just what you do when you dash after a moth, or gobble up a caterpillar."

Mrs. Robin was silent a moment and then chirped out joyfully,

"Well, he didn't get a young turkey anyway."

"No," was the answer, "and he'll have to get his dinner somewhere else because he'll have to hide from the mother turkey when he's safe inside the big forest."

"Then you think the mother turkey will have her chase for nothing?"

"No, hardly that, because she saved the life of her young one, but she will never get the hawk. You saw for yourself that her flight was no match for that of the hawk."

"But she's so much bigger than the hawk," said Mrs. Robin.

"Of course, and that is just why she could not catch him. I am surprised to learn that she could chase him even as far as she did.

But what became of her little ones while she was off on her wild hawk chase?"

"O, the other mother turkey who was right there brooded them all."

"She was a good bird."

"Yes, wasn't she, but Robin don't you think it is time the fly-away turkey is getting back?"

"I don't know I am sure," answered Robin looking away toward the far-distant forest, "that looks to me like a very long flight." (4)

"O, well, let's not worry about her," said Mrs. Robin cheerfully, "her babies are here and she will certainly get back just as soon as she can. But do tell me, dear Robin, what you were about all the while that I was gone. I hope you found something to amuse you, for I am afraid I was away a very long time."

THE RETURN.

"SO you were," said Mr. Robin, trying to look very much abused, "but you know I always make the best of my time, so I passed the time chatting with a Robin who has a nest just back of the cottage and he told me an interesting story."

"Can you not tell it to me?"

"Yes, if you care to hear it and I suppose you do, as you are always ready to listen to me when I wish to talk."

"Of course I am, dear Robin, why shouldn't I be when you always talk so well?" answered Mrs. Robin lovingly.

Mr. Robin gave his wife's glossy back a gentle stroke with his bill, and then began his story.

"It seems several springs ago this Mrs. Robin took a notion to build a nest on top of a smooth post."

"What a foolish whim," exclaimed his listener, "she ought to have known that was impossible."

"She didn't it seems, for she kept on trying, some birds, you know, are very stubborn.

The humans must have been watching her and noticed that the sticks which she brought fell off about as soon as she laid them down, for one day on her return with her beak full of stuff, she found some queer things which Mr. Robin said were called nails driven into the post. Around these some thread was wound so there was a short of frame work ready for the material she had brought. Mr. Robin said it was such a surprise to them both that at first they didn't know what to do. They talked about it a long time, looked it over, hopped around it, there was just room for them to stand outside of the thing, and they pulled at the string with all their might but could not break it. His wife declared at first that she would never build a nest in such

a place for it was too much of it human, but after spending one whole day fussing and scolding about it she finally seemed to think that she must do one of two things, either accept this help from a human, or else find some other place for the nest. She chirped and chirped about it, declaring there was no other spot in the world which suited here so well for a nest as the top of that post. So at last she went to work with all her might and built there the most beautiful nest that ever was, and now, her good husband told me, they come back every spring to that very same place." (1)

"And is it always ready and waiting for them?" asked the little wife eagerly.

"Yes, indeed, it is always there just as they left it when the last brood was hatched."

"But I shouldn't think it would be very nice to live in after it had been rained on and snowed on through all the cold winter time."

"O, I suppose Mrs. Robin tears it all to pieces and then uses the same stuff to build it up again, going after new stuff if necessary. I have seen mother birds do that way. Then, by giving the nest a new lining, it is just as good as ever."

"Yes, I suppose it is, I wonder if I will do that way when we come back here next spring."

"I dare say. I know that's what I would do if I were a mother bird."

"O, yes, you wise fellow," said his wife, poking him lovingly with her bill, "I should feel sorry for the little ones if you had to build

the nest, but maybe if you had to sit for so many days in the nest you would take good care to make it comfortable just as I do."

"All right," said Mr. Robin, "but now isn't it time for you to jump into your nest? I am all ready to sing you a good night song."

"It is nearly bed time," said Mrs. Robin, but instead of going to her nest as her husband had suggested, she flew to the very top of the old apple tree and looked off toward the forest. She was hoping to see that big gray form of the turkey sailing slowly toward the cottage. But not a bird was in sight against the calm evening sky.

"I suppose all honest, respectable birds have gone to roost at this hour," she thought, "and the poor wandering mother Turkey has

her head safely tucked under her wing by this time. How lonely she must be in that dark forest so far from her little ones."

Just at that moment Robin, who had flown to a near by fence post to sing his evening song, stopped in the middle of his tune and called in his most eager tones,

"Come here! Come here!"

Very much surprised, Mrs. Robin flew to the post and perched close beside her husband.

"See," he said, twitching his head toward a certain point back of the house, "there she comes!"

Sure enough, there was the mother Turkey walking slowly up the hill at the foot of which was a wide swamp which she had been obliged to cross.

"Do you suppose she was too tired to fly home?" asked Mrs. Robin anxiously.

"Perhaps so, and it was a long, long walk for her, poor thing."

"Well, I was wondering how she could stay all night so far from her little ones."

"Your wonder is answered, for you see she could not do it. How very, very tired she looks."

They watched her as she came slowly to the big oak tree under which she had left her young ones, and where there were now no turkeys to be seen. She did not halt there a moment, but went direct to the poultry house and soon by the calling, the peeping and general clamor they knew that the mother and her brood were re-united. (4)

"But what do you suppose became of the hawk?" asked Mrs. Robin.

"O, he's out in the forest yet, safe and sound, you don't need to worry about him."

"Indeed, I am not so foolish as that, I am only afraid he will come back tomorrow again after a baby turkey."

"No indeed," said Mr. Robin, "he'll not show up here again right away, and if he should get over his fright and venture back again by and by, the young turkeys will be big enough to take care of themselves."

"Yes, and maybe the whole flock will get after him and chase him away, wouldn't that be fine?"

"But he'll not come unless there are some more young turkeys or chickens hatched out

so you may never have the pleasure of seeing that chase," said Mr. Robin.

"Well, now, I can go to my nest and sleep in comfort," said his wife.

In another minute she had put her words into action and peace and quiet settled over their world.

FINIS.

NOTE

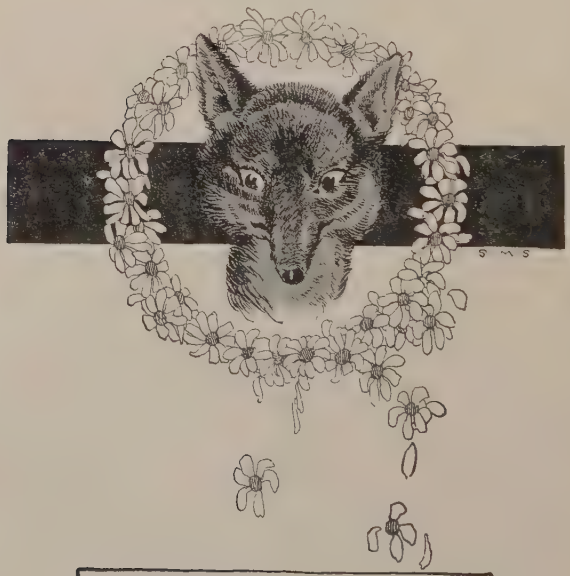
Read More Unusual Tales About Mr. and Mrs. Robin and Their Bird Neighbors in the Book of "Real Bird Tales"

FIFTY FUNNY ANIMAL TALES

WRITTEN BY
LAURA ROUNTREE SMITH

AUTHOR OF HAPPY MANIKIN-COMICAL CIRCUS STORIES-
TIDDLY WINKS BOOKS -JOLLY POLLY- CURLY TAIL - ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
JOSEPH J. MORA



A JUST RIGHT BOOK

ALBERT · WHITMAN · COMPANY
PUBLISHERS
CHICAGO U.S.A.

REAL BIRD TALES

COMMON BIRDS of FARM and ORCHARD

BY CLARA J. DENTON

•• AUTHOR OF ••

"BUSY LITTLE BIRDS" "REAL OUT-OF-DOOR STORIES" "OPEN AIR STORIES", ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY SUE SEELEY

"A JUST RIGHT BOOK"

PUBLISHED BY

ALBERT WHITMAN & COMPANY

CHICAGO U. S. A.

Ask for (UNBREAKABLE)

ALBERT WHITMAN'S
EASY READING JUVENILE LIBRARY
"JUST RIGHT BOOKS"

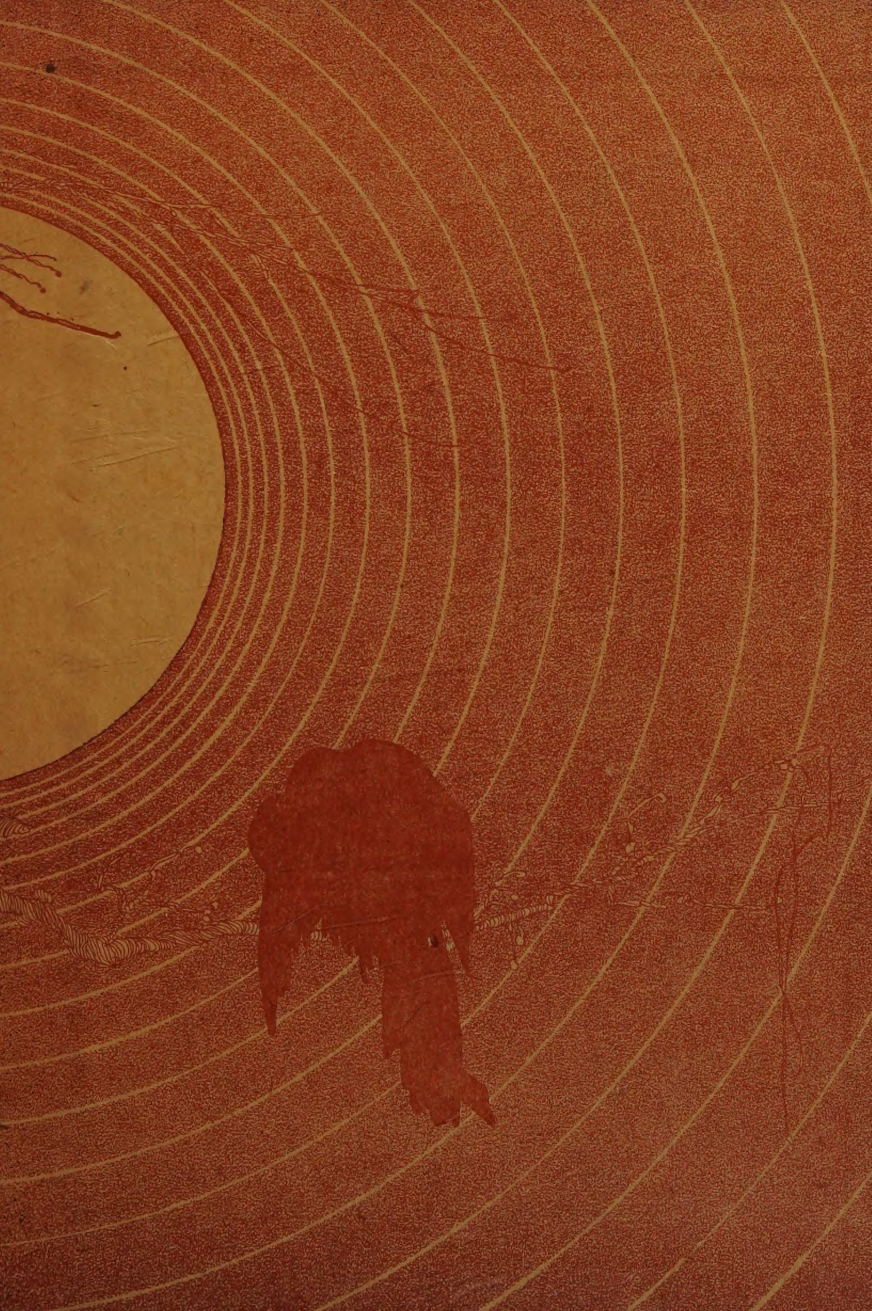
Profusely illustrated in colors; reinforced cloth binding; printed in large type on fine paper; jackets in color; price each, 60c.

The Tiddly Winks
Surprise Stories
The Party Twins
Washington's Boyhood
Comical Circus Stories
Real Out-of-Door Stories
Fifty Funny Animal Tales
In and Out-Door Playgames
Child's Garden of Verses
The Treasure Twins
Open Air Stories
Gingerbread Boy
Doll Land Stories
Tale of Curly Tail
Reading Time Stories
Knowledge Primer Games
Jolly Polly and Curly Tail
Flower and Berry Babies
Little Boy France
Busy Fingers Drawing Primer

Happy Manikin in Manners Town
The Vegetable and Fruit Children
The Dinner That Was Always There
Six Tiddly Winks and the A to Zees

PUBLISHED BY
ALBERT WHITMAN & COMPANY
CHICAGO, U. S. A.

MANY OTHER TITLES NOW READY.
WRITE FOR OUR COMPLETE CATALOG.



Y0-DHB-978